

HUTCHISON, who has been a leader on this issue, does not have to come to the floor again. I can assure her, before anything happens to disadvantage our troops, we will stand together in a bipartisan way, maybe on her bill, maybe on another bill, but we will stand in a bipartisan way to protect these troops. I thank her again for her leadership. There is evidence between her and Senator CASEY that there is a strong bipartisan feeling that we need to get this job done before the Senate shuts down. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I appreciate very much what the leader has said. I know this has been arduous, and I know the negotiations have been arduous. That is why I believe that in the next 3 hours, we will do the right thing on this issue. I hope we do the right thing for all of our country.

We have not talked about the other Federal employees who are essential and those who are going to be furloughed. There are so many people in this country who are going to be affected in so many ways if there is a government shutdown. I am focusing on the ones who cannot help themselves right now because they are overseas protecting our freedom, but there are many people who are going to have hardships that are unnecessary.

I do appreciate what Senator DURBIN has said.

There is one other person I want to mention; that is, Congressman LOUIE GOHMERT. He started on the House side with the same bill I have introduced on the Senate side. He has gained large support on the House side for this legislation. I commend Congressman GOHMERT for assuring, as we were watching this week the very spirited debate that has gone on about the possibility of having a government shutdown—LOUIE GOHMERT stepped up first. I give him credit for saying there is one group we cannot leave behind no matter what happens. Our bills are virtually the same. Whichever House can pass it first is fine with me because whatever we do, we have to do it together and we have to do it before midnight.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I just wandered onto the floor hoping we were coming close to some type of an agreement. I very much regret that we have to careen from week to week, from period to period funding our government on a temporary basis. I think all of us were hoping we could get this resolved. I still hold out some hope. There is 2 hours and 50 minutes or so of negotiations still to go.

I commend the Senator from Texas, Mrs. HUTCHISON, for her efforts. She has been relentless in reminding us for several days, if not more, that we cannot leave our troops in the field and those who are wearing the uniform serving our country in a situation where they are not paid. This, of course, affects drug enforcement agents and many others across the Federal spectrum. But these troops overseas are bearing hardship enough to not be caught up in a debate here which is necessary, a debate that needs to be resolved.

As I said earlier when I spoke this morning or early afternoon, this is just a small little brushfire, as dramatic as the press has made it, and it does have consequences—serious consequences. But compared to the size of the problem our Nation faces from a fiscal standpoint relative to what we need to do and what we need to be debating, this is a small part, just talking about funding for the next 6 months to fill a gap that was left when no budget was passed and no action was taken on it in the last Congress, the last fiscal year, to put us in a position where we can move into and debate the real issue that is before us; that is, how do we make decisions that will affect the long-term spending of this country, affect our budget and our deficit, and bring us back to a fiscally responsible place?

I hope as negotiations continue to go forward that we can resolve this today so that we can begin that important debate. But if we cannot, at the very least, I believe it is important that we extend this for a small amount of time—I regret we have to do it—so we can bring it to its final conclusion. But the most important point is that before midnight, we have to make sure we pass legislation which will ensure that our people in uniform are paid their rightful due for the service they are providing. Again, I commend the Senator from Texas for reminding us of that and being vigilant in making sure we absolutely address that issue before this time runs out.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to add Senator LANDRIEU as a cosponsor of Senate bill 724.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, that makes 78 Members of the Senate who are now sponsoring this bill for our military.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period for morning business for debate only be extended until 11:15 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the majority leader to be recognized at 11:15 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND FURTHER ADDITIONAL CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2011

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I will read a statement that was issued by Speaker BOEHNER and myself a few minutes ago. This is the statement:

We have agreed to an historic amount of cuts for the remainder of this fiscal year, as well as a short-term bridge that will give us time to avoid a shutdown while we get that agreement through both houses and to the President. We will cut \$78.5 billion below the President's 2011 budget proposal, and we have reached an agreement on the policy riders. In the meantime, we will pass a short-term resolution to keep the government running through Thursday. That short-term bridge will cut the first \$2 billion of the total savings.

I, first of all, express my appreciation to the Speaker and his office. It has been a grueling process. We did not do it at this late hour for drama. We did it because it has been very hard to arrive at this point.

I also express my appreciation to my counterpart, Senator MCCONNELL. We have talked during this process on a number of occasions. We have, as we say here, on many occasions it has turned out to be we have a terrific relationship. We do our best to protect each caucus. We have our battles here. But he is a pleasure to work with. I admire and appreciate his work for the people of Kentucky and the country.

This has been a long process. It has not been an easy process. Both sides have had to make tough choices, but tough choices are what this job is all